



April 4, 2008, No. 70

Cypriot media praises “Keepers of Each Other’s Culture”

The changing political climate in Cyprus is increasingly evident through the Cypriot media, often viewed as a mirror of the attitudes of the general public. Recent media coverage of bicommunal initiatives reflects on overall optimism among Cypriots that collaboration is possible. The media’s willingness to portray examples of the peace process at work demonstrates that such activities are not only possible but something to be encouraged.



In Kontea village, building blocks of reconciliation are literally made of stone

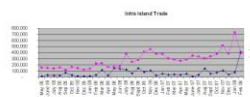


One successful project that has received positive media attention on both sides of the divide is UNDP-ACT’s Kontea Project. Here, past and present residents of the Kontea/Turkmenkoy village agreed to put politics aside for the sake of a greater goal: to protect and restore the village’s rich cultural heritage for future generations. To quote the project’s motto, they agreed to be “keepers of each other’s culture.” The rehabilitation of historic sites emphasizes the need for intercommunal cooperation as a prerequisite for the protection of a history which is common to both communities.

Business is Good: Trade Across the Divide

EDGE continues to advance trade over the dividing Green Line, facilitating the fourteenth Tri-Chamber Roundtable on April 2 and the first in a series of Business-to-Business sessions on April 3. At the Roundtable, the presidents of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce and the Cyprus Turkish Chamber of Industry discussed ways to overcome the hurdles that still complicate trade between the two communities and their plans for the landmark May 23 meeting, which will include their counterparts from Greece and Turkey. The meeting will take place on island and will focus on how the entire region stands to benefit economically from a Cyprus settlement.

Intra-Island Trade Statistics and Analysis



The mission of USAID/Cyprus is to encourage cooperation between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot individuals and organizations to reduce tensions and promote a climate that will foster reconciliation and a durable peace settlement.

SAVE

Documentation and repair work at the eleventh century church of Panayia Pergamiotissa in Akanthu village in the Karpas region is underway and should be completed by the summer. The exhibition and displays for the Buyukkonuk historic olive mill are being finalized as is the Famagusta Historic Trail map/guide. Taking advantage of a visit by Glen Anderson, SAVE's natural resources and environmental advisor, SAVE organized a roundtable in Lefke on mulching as well as meetings to assess results on the pilot mulching and turtle conservation activities. The geographic information systems/land use planning team continues to implement mentored projects with partners in the fields of environment, antiquities and agriculture.

ACT

ACT and its partners have produced podcasts on five different topics, including the Ledra Street opening. All five will soon be available in three languages (English, Greek and Turkish). The hope is that the podcasts will be aired on local radio programs, when relevant to current events. They are already available on the [UNDP-ACT website](#). The Cypriot Civil Society Strengthening Program training courses continued with the "Managing Staff and Volunteers in Civil Society Organizations" course, held in Greek in Larnaca and in Turkish in Lefke. MADAG held a Hygiene and Animal Health training on March 25th. ACT will hold a three-day planning session next week to lay the framework for the ACT extension period. UNDP-ACT staff, facilitators, and USAID will all participate.

EDGE

More than forty businesspeople from both communities participated in the food and beverage business-to-business (B-2-B) session facilitated by EDGE on April 3. This is the first in a series of B-2-B meetings—each focusing on a different sector—being organized as part of the ACT-supported Cyprus Producers Network. EDGE's sustainable tourism team is working with the Buyukkonuk Eco-Tourism Association to finalize their trail map/brochure and plans for a May 6 launch event meant to maintain interest and momentum around the eco-village initiative. On March 31, EDGE's banking team briefed USAID and the Embassy's Economic Officer on different activities in both commercial banking and supervision.

REAP

The Energy Professionals' Association is officially registered as an NGO in the TCC. More than 40 participants, including local energy experts and specialists, Energy Service Companies (ESCOs), alternative energy dealers, architects and engineers attended the Association's website launch event on March 27th. REAP completed the draft "law" on energy regulation and has shared it with the appropriate Turkish Cypriot energy experts and the EU Program Support Office, which will continue to provide the TCC with technical assistance in the area of energy reform after REAP wraps up.



↑ *SAVE continues to encourage Cypriots to conserve water. The above ad appeared in both English and Turkish in local newspapers to raise awareness on World Water Day.*

Turkish-Cypriots gather on the northern side of the new checkpoint in the UN Buffer Zone at Ledra Street. ↓



News from Nicosia

April 2

Request for task order proposals for new Cyprus program in capacity development and training launched by RSC in Budapest. Closing date for submissions is May 15, 2008.

April 3

Ledra Street, the historic pedestrian shopping street in the heart of Nicosia's divided capital, opened at 9:27 am after being barricaded since 1963, offering a new point of crossing between the island's two communities. The opening is part of a landmark agreement between Cypriot President Dimitris Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat on March 21 who agreed to resume peace negotiations by the end of June. [Listen to podcast about Ledra opening.](#)

OUR PROJECTS

- The **Action for Cooperation and Trust (ACT)** program mainstreams the concepts of conflict resolution in over 120 projects that encourage Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots to work on issues of common concern and solve problems together. Projects are currently underway in the areas of youth, education and tolerance, civil society strengthening, sustainable development and cultural heritage preservation. ACT is funded through a cooperative agreement between USAID and the UN Development Program (UNDP).
- The **Cyprus Partnership for Economic Growth (CyPEG)** includes activities that support economic growth in the Turkish Cypriot community to decrease the disparities between the communities and promote reconciliation. CyPEG is implemented by U.S. contractors under different USAID contract mechanisms.
 - The objective of the **Economic Development and Growth for Enterprises (EDGE)** project is to strengthen the domestic and international competitiveness of Turkish-Cypriot small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and help restructure the financial sector so that SMEs can thrive.
 - The **Resource Efficiency Achievement Program (REAP)** promotes more efficient use of water and energy by conducting audits and upgrades of representative business establishments and households. REAP also provides technical assistance to Turkish Cypriot energy experts.
 - The **Supporting Activities that Value the Environment (SAVE)** project focuses on improving (1) the competitiveness, financial status, and quality of basic services and infrastructure to more easily meet international and EU standards and (2) Turkish Cypriot capacity to manage natural and cultural resources for economic growth.